



AHATA and Pricewaterhouse Coopers join in an historic agreement The Strategic Alliance Partnership makes Aruban business history

On Thursday morning, in the offices of Pricewaterhouse Coopers Mr. Jorge Pesquera, President and CEO of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) along with Mr. Edsel Lopez, Managing Partner of Pricewaterhouse Coopers Aruba, signed an historic agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. Both gentlemen expressed their belief that this is a demonstration of the commitment of Pricewaterhouse Coopers to the advancement of the Aruban tourism community and the development of local marketing talent, which is needed to lead Aruba into the future.

According to Mr. Pesquera, the Signature Alliance Partner is a new category of membership to AHATA. The board of AHATA feels this new category will attract local corporations with which AHATA can form partnerships and so involve more of the business community in support of the organization's strategic plans for Aruba. These plans are now directed towards Marketing, Professional Development, Sustainable Economic Development, and preservation of the environment. Future programs would also include training and education.

The immediate benefit of the Strategic Alliance with Pricewaterhouse Coopers is evidenced by the popular and prestigious Professional Development Speaker Series. AHATA hosted Mr. Bob Gilbert President and CEO of the Hotel Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMIAI) on Friday morning, May 12. His presentation "Envisioning the Future-Skills for Sales & Marketing Success" is only the first in what Mr. Pesquera promises will be at least three such presentations per year, if not more.

"It has been our aim over the last few years to establish a more pro-active business intelligence and capability within AHATA," asserted Mr. Pesquera during the Friday morning signing. "This partnership will open channels of communication through a global organization with tremendous capabilities that will help us find the right sort of tools and the right kinds of strategies to maximize the investments that we make in marketing and other areas."

Mr. Pesquera commended the PWC team of Edsel Lopez, Hans Ruiter and Ruben Goedhoop, expressing that "They have been key players in many tourism projects and provide services to many of our members on a wide range of tax, business advisory and financial issues. As a valued member, the resources of PWC can be of great benefit to AHATA's business intelligence capabilities as well as setting strategic directions for our associations. Most importantly, with their funding support AHATA will be able to expand on the quality of programs and speakers invited to Aruba."

Mr. Edsel Lopez also indicated his great satisfaction with the signing of this historic agreement. "AHATA is recognized as a professional, progressive NGO that is creative and community minded. They have an outstanding track record of being proactive when it is required. It is our aim to be very supportive of their efforts in furthering the success of Aruba's tourism and hospitality industry."

AHATA and PWC are united in their belief that the future of Aruba's hospitality industry is all about education and providing leadership in promoting knowledge and emerging technology. PWC is a company dedicated to business development, and asserts that better educated and informed business leaders play a key role. AHATA shares this belief, and with this partnership seeks to explore all avenues to expand knowledge, expertise, and awareness amongst the island's hospitality and tourism executives. They believe it is imperative that Aruba's hospitality industry leaders be as best prepared as possible to meet market demand and so deliver expanded economic success to the community at large.

Both Pesquera and Lopez agree, "We are proud of our role in developing the future leaders of Aruba's hospitality industry, and perhaps some who will eventually lead regional and global organizations.

One direct benefit of the Signature Alliance Partnership Program will allow AHATA to reallocate more funds towards investments in marketing in particular. Mr. Pesquera informed the press that AHATA is inviting other organization to join in partnership with them in initiating a number of programs that require professional resources. Through the Signature Alliance Program, local corporations can achieve valuable exposure through the community while supporting key AHATA initiatives. These will include such programs as the Coastal Zone Management Project, and the SHOCO Awards for Outstanding Service and Professional Achievement. It will also allow the company employees to take part in a number of training programs and to participate in AHATA's environmental protection initiatives.

AHATA commends Pricewaterhouse Coopers Aruba for their vision and commitment to Aruba's tourism industry, and is confident of a long term partnership that will result in the growth and success of both.